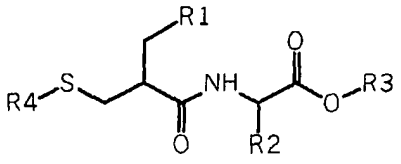
ATTACHMENT A
Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Previously presented) A process for preparing a compound of formula (I):



(I)

wherein:

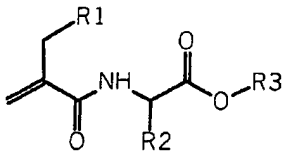
- R1 represents: - a phenyl group; or
  - a 3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl group;
- R2 represents a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;
- R3 represents a lower alkyl group or a lower phenylalkylene group; and
- R4 represents a linear or branched aliphatic acyl radical or an aromatic acyl radical,

said process comprising step (B) performing a Michaël addition of a thioacid of formula (IV):

R4SH (IV)

wherein R4 has the same meaning as in formula (I),

with an α-substituted acrylamide derivative of formula (V):

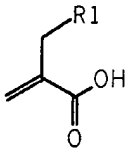


(V)

wherein R1, R2 and R3 have the same meaning as in formula (I).

2. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the group R4 represents an acetyl radical CH_3-CO-, a benzoyl radical C_6H_5-CO- or a pivaloyl radical $(CH_3)_3$-CO-.

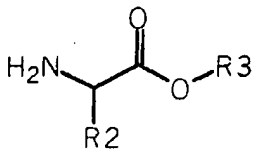
3. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 1~~, wherein said α-substituted acrylamide derivative of formula (V) is obtained from a step (A), prior to step (B), said step (A)~~ which further comprises the step (A), prior to step (B), wherein step (A) comprises ~~comprising performing the~~ coupling ~~of~~ an acrylic acid of formula (VI):



(VI)

wherein R1 has the same meaning as in formula (I),

with an amino ester of formula (VIII):

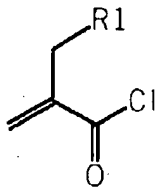


(VIII)

wherein R2 and R3 have the have the same meaning as in formula (I).

4. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 3, wherein the coupling of the acrylic acid (VI) and of the amino ester (VIII) that is performed in step (A) comprises the successive steps:

(A1) reacting said α-substituted acrylic acid of formula (VI) with an chloro acid so as to obtain an acid chloride of formula (VII):



(VII)

wherein R1 has the same meaning as in formula (I); and

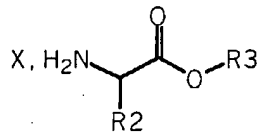
(A2) reacting the acid chloride of formula (VII) thus obtained with said amino ester of formula (VIII), in the presence of a base, so as to achieve the coupling.

5. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 4, wherein the chloro acid used in step (A1) is selected from the group consisting of $SOCl_2$, ClCO-COCl, PCl_3 and PCl_5.

6. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 4, wherein the acid chloride of formula (VII) obtained from step (A1) is subjected to a distillation step before being used in step (A2).

7. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 4, wherein the base used in step (A2) is an organic amine.

8. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 4, wherein the amino ester used in step (A2) is introduced in the form of a salt of formula (VIIIa):



(VIIIa)

wherein R2 and R3 have the have the same meaning as in formula (I); and
wherein X is chosen from HCl, CH_3SO_3H and 4-methylphenyl-SO_3H.

9. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 4, wherein step (A2) is carried out in the presence of an organic solvent selected from the group consisting of toluene, dichloromethane, 1,2-dichloroethane, chloroform, N,N-dimethylformamide, 1,4-dioxane, N-methylpyrrolidone, N,N-dimethylacetamide, butyl acetate, ethyl acetate, isobutyl acetate, isopropyl acetate, methyl acetate, propyl acetate and tetrahydrofuran.

10. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein compound (V) used in step (B) is a chiral compound wherein R2 denotes a lower alkyl group, said compound (V) being used at least predominantly in its S configuration or at least predominantly in its R configuration.

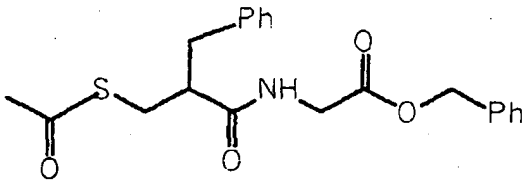
11. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 10, wherein compound (V) is used in its optically pure S form.

12. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 11~~, wherein compound (V) is prepared~~which further comprises the step of preparing compound (V) by a condensation reaction of an acrylic acid of formula (VI) with an amino ester of formula (VIII) derived from a natural amino acid.

13. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 10, wherein chirality inducers are used in step (B).

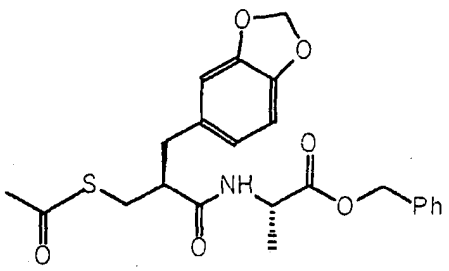
14. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 10, further comprising, after step (B), a subsequent step (C) of separating the diastereoisomers obtained in step (B).

15. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein said obtained compound of formula (I) is benzyl N-(RS)-[2-acetylthiomethyl-1-oxo-3-phenylpropyl]glycinate of formula (II):



(II)

16. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein said obtained compound of formula (I) is benzyl N-(S)-[2-acetylthiomethyl-1-oxo-3-(3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl)propyl]-(S)-alaninate of formula (III):



(III)